

**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA
JUNE 22, 2015**

PI 15-10

TO: Directors
County Social Services
Regional Supervisors of County Social Services
Foster Care Eligibility Workers

FROM: Dean Sturn, Administrator, Foster Care Program
Deb Lachenmeier, IV-E Foster Care Eligibility and System Support Specialist

SUBJECT: Foster Care Eligibility Quality Assurance Reviews, Manual Service Chapter 447-10-18

PROGRAMS: Foster Care Eligibility

EFFECTIVE: **June 18, 2015**

RETENTION: Until Manualized

The outcome of a recent audit of Children and Family Services Title IV-E foster care eligibility determination review process has resulted in the need for a clearer and more definitive outline of the process followed in North Dakota.

Manual Service Chapter 447-10-18 is a new addition that provides a brief overview of the federal review process and a more detailed outline of the review process in place at the state level.

In the past, reviews concentrated specifically on Title IV-E foster care eligibility determinations. The review process has been expanded to include all foster care funding sources. The review team will continue to provide case review results to each county. Agencies found out of compliance, will now be required to take corrective action within 30 days. A Corrective Action Verification sheet will be sent with the review results. If corrective action is required, the verification sheet must be signed and dated by the person making the corrections. A signature is also required by their supervisor or director confirming that all corrective action has been completed. The sheet is to be returned to Children and Family Services by the due date indicated. The policy further defines the process and obligations of those agencies that are out of compliance with state and federal statutes, rules, policy, and regulations when determining foster care eligibility and authorizing payments on behalf of the foster care child.

NEW ADDITION

Foster Care Eligibility Quality Assurance Reviews 447-10-18

Accurate eligibility determination and proper payments are underlying principles throughout this policy chapter. Federal law requires scheduled audits to assess compliance with federal requirements for Title IV-E foster care eligibility in North Dakota. A federal audit team comprised of state and federal auditors review eligibility determinations and whether federal funds are expended correctly on IV-E eligible children in reimbursable placements. Feedback is provided to the state to promote proper and efficient administration of the Title IV-E program. States found to be in substantial compliance are not subject to review for 3 years. States that exceed the error threshold must complete a Program Improvement Plan and undergo a secondary review annually.

To ensure quality and prepare for the federal audit, a State Review team comprised of State and county eligibility workers will review a random stratified sample of foster care eligibility cases each year. All match codes will be pulled into the sample to ensure a comprehensive understanding of issues impacting Title IV-E eligibility. The case draw methodology will remain on file with Decision Support Services and can be made available upon request. The review will focus on the initial eligibility determination and at least one payment authorized during a specific period under review. County agencies will receive notice of selected files 2 – 3 weeks prior to the scheduled review. Feedback will be provided to the financial county within 30 days following the audit. If an error is discovered, the State Review Team will provide the financial county with an explanation of the error and instructions on how to correct the error, if applicable. The financial county must rectify correctable errors within 30 days from notification. The financial county must provide the State Review Team with documentation of the corrective action and the date of completion. If the financial county fails to complete the corrections within 30 days, CFS will follow up with the financial county.

A financial county that is found to be out of compliance with State statutes, rules, or policies, or federal statutes and regulations when determining foster care eligibility or authorizing foster care payments will be required to submit a corrective action plan to Children and Family Services. The financial county will be required to refund payments made that are not in compliance with Service Chapter 447-10 Title IV-E Foster Care and Service Chapter 623-05 Foster Care Maintenance Payments. Reimbursement arrangements will be secured between the financial county and Department through the Corrective Action Plan.

If you have any questions, please contact Deb Lachenmeier at 701-328-1710. Thank you.